



# Newsletter

Rivelin Valley Conservation Group

## Autumn 2020 no 116

### Through The Chair

Welcome to the autumn newsletter. Covid may have thrown us all a bit out of kilter, but I have found it a good time to reflect on life and redefine my priorities. I've also managed to complete some tasks that were never otherwise going to get finished.

It is with great sadness that one of our longest serving committee members, Margaret Sanderson, is to stand down. Margaret is one of two existing committee members who have been involved from the very beginning; almost 30 years ago and has edited the newsletter for all that time and was also membership secretary for many years. If anyone deserves a medal for voluntary dedication, then this is it. The RVCG sends its best wishes and to thank Margaret for her immense contribution.

Almost in the same breath, the RVCG would like to welcome Professor Mark Bateman to the committee, having been a member and newsletter deliverer for many years. Mark has joined just at an interesting time as the RVCG is busy planning a number of events for its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2021. This includes plans for a sculpture trail around Rivelin park. If anyone is keen to get involved in the planning, sculpting or financing of this project then please get in touch.

Finally, as we are unable to hold our usual winter Open Meetings, I am looking to hold a number of Zoom meetings in the spring. The first of these is Nick Duggan at 7:30pm Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> January. Details are enclosed. Glad Tidings to you and your families for the Xmas period and looking forward to when we can all meet again.

Graham Appleby  
RVCG Chairman

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### Planning news

The planning article is for members only  
You can find the membership form at:  
[Rivelin Valley Conservation Group - Join In](#)  
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#### **New Committee Member welcomed**



Mark Bateman has recently joined the RVCG committee. He is a Professor in Palaeoenvironmental Reconstruction at the Department of Geography at Sheffield University. He moved to Stannington in 2001 and was immediately smitten by the history and geology of the Rivelin Valley. He became a member of the RVCG a number of years ago and also volunteered to deliver the RVCG newsletter in his local area. The RVCG committee has been blessed with a number of talented individuals over the years and Mark is yet another who is keen to bring new ideas and perspective to the group. Mark has joined us without any particular role at the moment and will monitor proceedings until he gets his feet firmly under the table.

Graham Appleby

## In Memory of Frank Brazil

A couple of months ago Keith found a brass plaque down Rivelin in memory of Frank Brazil who was a founder member of RVCG. He had a chat with Frank's wife, Mary Brazil and she confirmed that it was indeed a plaque which she had had made for her husband. It had been screwed to a wooden bench near to Frank Wheel and when the bench rotted and disappeared a few years ago, so did the plaque.

It was in quite a bad way so Keith brought it home and tried to clean it up the best he could before installing it back in its rightful place on the bench at the Frank Wheel.



Mary Brazil thought it was wonderful that after all these years, the plaque was found and put back. Mary can't go down the valley like she used to (she is 90) but she is still very sprightly and you would not guess her age. We have a group of Den Bank ladies who used to lunch once a month before the lockdown. We now plan to go down the valley and look at the plaque and have lunch in the cafe when all this is over, and probably toast Keith, with coffee, in appreciation.



## Memories of Rivelin – Mrs E J Frith

*"I would like to tell you about King Edward's Hospital in Rivelin Valley. My father, a gardener from the age of 19 years old, Mr Frank Hibberd, was made manager of the Lodge Moor Hospital, working 3 days a week, 2 days at Rivelin Hospital and 1 day at Winter Street, Walkley. It proved difficult travelling to Rivelin Hospital as the buses didn't start running till 10am. So it meant walking all the way even in bad weather. My father's apprentice, who lived near us on Cross Lane, had a motor bike and side car and offered to take my father, who lived in Stannington View Road. Their duties were to keep the sides of the drive colourful for visitors and to cut down the trees behind the rear wards which made them dark. A small glass house and shed in the grounds were used to grow seeds and colourful indoor plants for the matrons.*

*I am now 95 years old and I remember riding on the bus running to Norfolk Arms Hotel, a turning point on Manchester Rd. - getting off at the Rivelin Post Office and walking along Rivelin Valley Road to see the lovely display of wild bluebells in the wood behind the hospitals. I gathered a bunch and wrapped the stalks in large leaves for my mother who wasn't feeling well.*

*After my marriage in 1945, my father-in-law, Mr William Noel Frith, told me he had been injured and discharged from the 1<sup>st</sup> World War, giving him a limp. He lived with his 3 brothers and 2 sisters in Upperthorpe. He could find no work, except on good days when men were hired by the company making a new road from Malin Bridge to Manchester Road. They felled trees and cleared the roots and earth away to waiting lorries. If the weather was bad they were sent home without pay. Not a good situation for the family who had to pay rent. One of his brothers was badly gassed and funeral costs had to be paid and another brother married and lived at Woodseats, so my father-in-law became the only earner. The valley had been a tin mine on one side and workers pocketed pieces to take home and sell. Gradually more days were worked and my father-in-law was made a foreman with a better wage, and took possession of a new corporation, 2 bedroomed house at Shiregreen. But that winter work stopped and all the men were layed off. Not being able to pay the rent, they had to return to a back-to-back house in Upperthorpe. What a way to treat returning soldiers from war. He also told me he swam in the open-air pool which closed in 1935."*

## **Ode To Revelling in Rivelin - Roger Kite**

*Here we go again with Boris' orders  
That South Yorkshire's got to close all its  
borders  
So Sheffield's boundaries are shut once  
again  
With no one let out and no one let in*

*The valley is full of visitors out walking  
Or standing about in groups of six, talking  
There's the usual joggers and runners and  
bikers  
So in the end there's no room for people  
like us*

*Natural history lovers may moan that they  
hate 'em  
But my guess is that we've got to  
accommodate 'em  
So the nature trail down our lovely old  
Rivelin  
Will come under pressure it's size to be  
doublin'*

*Out in the fresh air it's too much to ask  
That folk continue to be still wearing a mask  
Passing places are needed for our walk to  
be enhanced  
And to ensure we can all keep safely socially  
distanced*

*No room to park down at Havelock or Rails  
More car parks are needed – that goes  
without fail  
So much construction – they'll draw up a  
scheme  
And then call in the RVCG Task Team*

Roger (and Out)

## **Margaret Sanderson (over and out!)**

I've been a part of RVCG since its start back in 1991 and I have edited the newsletter for all this time. For many years I was also responsible for membership. However, now I'm very nearly 82 it feels like the right time to retire.

I was born in Crosspool in 1939, the year World war 2 broke out. I have lived here since, so the Rivelin Valley has been a big part of my life.

My earliest memories, going back to when I was around 6 or 7, are of my father taking me on walks and pointing out the mill ponds. He said that when he was young his father had taken him on the same walks when the mills were still working. Around the same time, we used to pick bilberries and blackberries with my grandma, who pulled the briars down with her umbrella.

When I was a little older (around 7 or 8) I was a terrible tomboy and would climb trees and the rocks on Den Bank with my friend Geoffrey. When we tired of that we would collect flat pebbles to skim over the mill ponds. One day, when in the long field below Den Bank, I lifted a flat stone and a snake reared its head and hissed at me. I ran all the way home. My father told me it was a grass snake and I had nothing to worry about.

The valley has also been a favourite place for my son and grandchildren. Here's a photo of my son sitting on a rock that I used to climb when I was young, on what looks like a cold day in the mid-1960s. Rivelin Hospital can be seen on the right when it was still in use.



I would like to thank all those on the Committee for their friendship and I wish RVCG all the best for the future.

Margaret Sanderson

**The RVCG would like to thank  
Valleyside Garden Centre for  
their continued support**



## Grogram Wheel

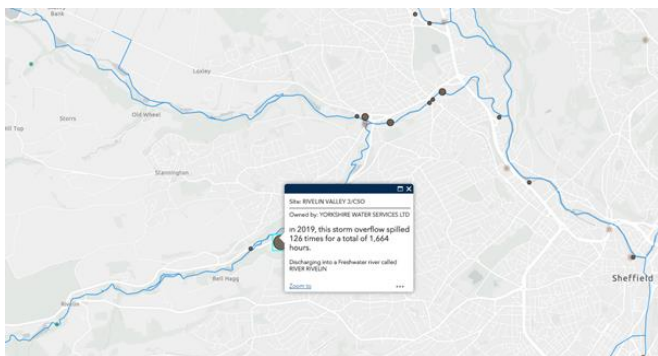
The very first mill you came across when walking up the Rivelin Valley from Malin Bridge was Grogram Wheel. Built around 1620, about the same time as Mousehole Forge, and was the only Rivelin mill to be damaged by the Sheffield Flood of 1864. It was used for cutlery grinding, bean crushing and for wood turning lathes. Famous for one of its larger waterwheels called 'Groggie' and was later used to pump air back into Mousehole Forge to help fire its busy furnaces. It ceased working around 1935 and the mill and its dam have now been replaced by an electricity sub-station.



*Grogram Wheel picture recently discovered by Keith Kendall*

## Sewerage Discharge into the Rivelin

An article in the Guardian newspaper was highlighted to us recently by Philip Jones.  
<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/jul/01/water-firms-raw-sewage-england-rivers>



I guess the increasing intensity of storms over the last few years, has meant that combined sewers will inevitably become swollen to capacity. Excess water (and sewerage) is then allowed to flow untreated into nearby waterways through a Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO). The one highlighted in Rivelin can be seen near to Holme Head

Weir. In 2019, 126 instances and over 1,664 hours were recorded at this location. The privatised water companies have been forced by the government to provide monitoring at all CSO's. Fortunately, the Sheffield City Council monitor the paddling pool water in Rivelin Park very carefully. I don't suppose this was such a problem for the bathers in New Dam around 1909.



*New Dam was built in 1853 to supplement the water supply to Spooners Wheel which is now Rivelin Park Café*

A recent news article also mentioned that sewers are being monitored for Covid which allows authorities to identify Covid hotspots. So possibly something else to be concerned about where untreated sewerage is allowed to enter water courses. Perhaps I'll just wait for Hillsborough leisure centre to reopen.

Graham Appleby

## Floating Pennywort



*Floating pennywort © Tim Pankhurst/Plantlife*

**Floating pennywort**, *Hydrocotyle ranunculoides*, is a strong contender for the title of worst aquatic weed in the UK. Originating from Central and South America, the plant arrived in the UK in the late 1980's as an oxygenating ornamental plant for the aquatic trade. To my knowledge, we have

had at least a couple of instances at Hind Wheel in Rivelin Valley where it has been sprayed with chemicals by a chap in a canoe to try and keep it at bay. This very invasive weed quickly covers the surface of any water body thus starving the water of oxygen to the detriment of the living aquatic organisms. If you would like to know more, read this article in the Angling Trust newsletter. [New partnership to control highly invasive floating pennywort choking UK's waterways - Angling Trust](#). (Provided by Keith Kendall)

Britain does have its own non-invasive version called Irish Marsh Pennywort (*Hydrocotyle vulgaris* L.) and possibly the two got mixed up in garden centres. Interestingly, pennywort can be juiced, eaten raw, dried, sautéed or pickled. Anyone for a pennywort burger?

Graham

Appleby

## Heritage Highways

Volunteers have been able to continue researching the old working routes and packhorse trails in the Sheffield Lakeland area. The old highways were crucial lifelines for industry and agriculture, important to social and economic life and central to all cultural development. Today, some of these can be enjoyed as part of the lovely Rivelin Nature Trail. Five of the mills were on the River Rivelin. The area was an historic hive of activity, with workmen, packhorses and carts traversing up and down, back and forth across Rivelin Valley, long before motor vehicles came on the scene. One such route is the ancient "Road to the Wheels", already well recognised and mapped before the Sheffield Enclosure Act of 1791. This is a venerable walled lane, which starts near the Cottages on Long Lane, descending in a north westerly direction through an old Rivelin Ford, exiting close to the Swallow Wheel (itself pre dating 1692). Stepping stones for workers, who were on foot, are still visible some metres downstream. From the Nature Trail, you can also see the end of the hollowed way between the two old walls, with a significant stone marker.

This "Road to the Wheels" was used by a few walkers, and even the occasional horse, up until the 1980s. It was once an important part of the local infrastructure for raw materials and products in horse drawn carts or in panniers carried by pack horses.



*These steppingstones in Rivelin Valley mark the position of an old heritage highway.*

Roger Kite was once a member of the Sheffield City Council public rights of way team and provided this comment:-

*"At the time of drawing up the Definitive Rights of Way Map, the cottages and the track down to the river were owned by the City Council and in spite of the ancient evidence and the steppingstones the residents of the cottages were supported by the Council and the route was not included. It could have been a significant addition to the links across the valley. Subsequently at least one of the steppingstones has been moved"*

For more up-to-date information on SLLP:-

[Sheffield Lakeland Landscape Partnership | Sheffield & Rotherham Wildlife Trust \(wildsheffield.com\)](#)

The Sheffield and Rotherham Wildlife Trust are also very active on the land that they own for example the Redmires Water Vole survey and other interesting projects. Read about all their current projects here:-

[News | Sheffield & Rotherham Wildlife Trust \(wildsheffield.com\)](#)

Thank you to Heritage Highways volunteer Melanie Fitzgerald for the above article.



**Selected notes from meetings of Sheffield Waterways Strategy Group, 8<sup>th</sup> Sept 2020 and 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2020.**

***Update on the 'Protecting Sheffield from Flooding' programme***

- Work on the flood defences on the River Loxley from Malin Bridge to the Don confluence has started and is expected to last about 12 months. Discussions have been going on for better public access along the river behind the buildings between Hillsborough Corner and Penistone Road. Three 'pocket parks' are planned, one on the corner of Penistone Road near B&Q, one on Livesey Street and a small strip behind the Malin Bridge Park and Ride. The aim is to enhance the river corridor rather than having a flood defence function.
- Outline designs have been prepared for flood defence work on the Neepsend to Kelham Island stretch of the Don. The second phase will involve works upstream between the Loxley/Don confluence and Stocksbridge and may include a flood storage area at Wharnccliffe Side to offset loss of floodplain further downstream; needs more survey and investigation.
- The Environment Agency plans to allocate funding to provide upstream storage on the River Don. This could include flood storage areas, but also perhaps buying the top two metres of water in a Yorkshire Water reservoir – apparently this approach has worked well in Calderdale (Gorpley Reservoir).
- Work is continuing on opportunities for Natural Flood Management projects in the Upper Don catchment. £600,000 allocation from recent funding.
- Various options for nature-based solutions and small flood storage areas are being explored in the Sheaf and Porter Valley, including on the Limb Brook. The work is expected to take several months and will be followed by a public consultation.

***Fish passage on the Don***

- There is now a completely open route on the River Don between Sheffield and the North Sea for fish such as salmon, as installation of a fish pass on the remaining two weirs has been completed.

Five weirs in the centre of Sheffield have fish passes of varying types – Brightside, Norfolk Bridge (Burton's Weir), Lady's Bridge, Kelham Island and Steelbank – so do look out for those if you are passing. I recently had a look at the naturalistic fish pass on the Sheaf at Millhouses Park (see video at <https://youtu.be/H4BU0UCb9vI>), and the technical fish and eel pass installed on the Don beside Sprotborough weir – both are worth a look too.

Local artists and conservation experts came together in September to celebrate the regeneration of the River Don and the return of the iconic Atlantic salmon after an absence of 220 years. Highlights include the 'Salmon of Steel', a 7ft sculpture of a leaping salmon made by Scrap Metal Artist Jason Heppenstall (made from 1533 spoons (scales), 60 metres of stainless bar, two 1960s lamps (eyes), and one spade (label)); a beautiful trail map, illustrated by Sophie Carter; and a podcast in which invited speakers reveal the story of the river. For more details see:

<https://festivalofthemind.sheffield.ac.uk/2020/protopia/salmon-of-steel/>

The salmon sculpture is situated on the concourse at Sheffield Railway Station for 6 months – apparently not yet decided where it will go next.

- Discussions have been held about repairing the damaged weir at Hillsborough corner – a fish pass may be installed as part of the work.

***Environment Agency river maintenance work at Malin Bridge***

You may have noticed some clearance work going on in the River Loxley at Malin Bridge in the first week of September. It included tree and vegetation removal, with some vegetation being left to provide cover for

fish, and the removal of thicker areas of deposition material under and immediately downstream of both bridges. Environment Agency plans to get in touch with RVCg and Loxley groups to talk about future works.

### **Sheffield Station – Platform 5 Daylighting Project**

The Sheaf and Porter River Trust have been working on a project to let daylight into the River Sheaf culvert beneath platform 5 of Sheffield Midland Railway Station. The current covering will be replaced by a 'lightwell' with a grille surrounded by a railing, so that it will be possible to look down into the culvert. The plan is explained in a short YouTube video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CsAqOeohN5M>.

### **Sheffield 'Grey to Green' project**

You may have seen some publicity in September about the completion of the second phase of the Sheffield 'Grey to Green' project, where a redundant carriageway from West Bar to Lady's Bridge has been replaced with an area of wild flowers, trees and shrubs. The sloping route runs adjacent to the River Don, and is in an area of the city prone to flooding so the land has been configured to help slow down surface-water runoff and reduce the amount reaching the River Don. Amongst other benefits of the multi-functional scheme, there are five works of public art, made from steel and stone, and some benches. For further details see video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EZMimPUwVug>

**Sue Shaw, 5<sup>th</sup> November 2020**

### **Stocking filler!**

Sales of the latest edition of the "Walking the Rivelin" book have been slow since 'lockdown' in March, but have still crept up to 494 (out of 1000 copies printed in May 2019). Can you help to tip sales over the 500 mark by Christmas?! The books are available via RVCg Committee members and online from the RVCg website, as well as from several local outlets, including Beeches of Walkley, Space 205 (Crookes), Valleyside Garden Centre, Broomhill Post Office and Rivelin Park café.

**Ash dieback** (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*), also known as *Chalara fraxinaria*, is even more serious than Dutch elm disease. Nationally 70M ash trees are affected costing the economy an estimated £15bn. The Sheffield City Council estimate there are around 250,000 ash trees in Sheffield. 150,000 are under SCC control, the rest on private land. The largest ash trees in parks and on roadsides seem to be the worst affected as they are open to the windborne spread of the disease. However, in woodlands, it tends to be the saplings as they are mostly affected by the infected leaf litter. Strangely, you can find a seriously diseased ash tree next to a healthy ash tree and the difference appears to be genetics. Therefore, authorities are planning the replanting of resistant seedlings. The SRWT are also experimenting with different ash varieties in Grenowoods. Porter Clough is one of the worst affected areas in Sheffield. Infected trees become brittle and therefore dangerous and need specialist knowledge and skills to be felled safely. Diseased trees on private land near to roads should be reported to the SCC Highways Department otherwise diseased garden trees should be reported to SCC Building Control. Look out for the following notice appearing in Rivelin soon.



**Work will soon begin on this path to remove Ash Dieback affected trees which are in severe decline. Ash Dieback is a highly infectious disease affecting ash trees. It has killed up to 85% of ash in Northern Europe and has been spreading across the UK since 2012. It is now beginning to cause extensive dieback of ash in Sheffield. Affected trees become unpredictably brittle and can drop branches or fail once the disease takes hold.**

**Please avoid working areas and take notice of warning signs placed by our contractor. Please contact us via email if you have any further queries.**

**Public Rights Of Way Group**  
Email: [pro@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:pro@sheffield.gov.uk)  
[www.sheffield.gov.uk](http://www.sheffield.gov.uk)

Graham Appleby



## Ten Years as RVCG Chairman



"Behind every good chairman there is a good chairman's wife". Not that I think of myself as a good chairman necessarily but there is no doubt that a lot of my personal life is affected by my contribution to the RVCG and so my wife has had to be very tolerant. I have no specific qualifications for chairman, but I guess it is just a mixture of life experiences that gave me the confidence to step into the enormous shoes of the retiring chairman, Roger Kite, after 19 years, in 2010. 'A football team is only as good as its last game' - and that's how I feel as chairman. I feel that I am judged constantly by the things I write and the conversations I hold with people. If I got it wrong, then people would leave the organisation. So, the fact that the RVCG has maintained a fairly consistent membership of 230 households means that I have at least maintained the status quo. I have also been blessed with a talented group of committee members that most employers could only dream about.

It appears that there are few people willing to lead voluntary organisations but there are many people willing to volunteer their time to a good cause. It almost brings a tear to the eye when I think of the dedication of the 70 or so individuals within the committee, the task team, the newsletter deliverers and a bunch of other people who proudly represent the RVCG.

Climate change, flooding, tree diseases, urban creepage and vandalism are huge challenges for any nation but the RVCG tries to do its bit towards preserving a little corner of Britain. A national newspaper 'The Guardian' has just put Rivelin in its top ten walks in Britain so how's that for a commendation?

However, Health and Safety have created a bit of a restriction on our task team activities. A number of accidents to the public by other voluntary groups has led the SCC to be far more strict on its volunteer activities. Again, as chairman, I am ultimately responsible for the health and safety of every member of the task team and something I deeply care about. Working in a wet woodland can be quite dangerous and so everyone has to be vigilant to the hazards and the safety of the passing public. Having said that, the SCC are more than welcoming to have volunteer groups looking after their land due to lack of government funding and reduced Council employees. We have gained the confidence of a number of key Council employees over the years which is something I wish to maintain. We have undertaken some quite ambitious projects in the past that are maybe outside our comfort zone, but the task team volunteers stepped up the challenge and completed some projects that are currently being enjoyed by many members of the visiting public.

So what is the RVCG?

It was initially set up to maintain a nature trail corridor through upper Hagg wood and later along the Rivelin Valley. We also hold monthly talks throughout the winter months and have a stall at various public events. Recent developments have involved the RVCG more in the history of the Rivelin mills and the cutlery industry, thanks to Mike Dyson - a local historian. The RVCG is about to celebrate its 30<sup>th</sup> year and so we are looking to create a sculpture trail around Rivelin Park and I am looking for your input and support. Why every household around Rivelin is not a member of RVCG is my failing. Let's get your friends and neighbours to join so that they can read about Rivelin in our newsletter as well as see it out of their window!

Graham Appleby

## Proposed Sculpture Trail

As part of the RVCG 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations, I suggested to the committee that we invest in some sort of a large sculpture that represents the natural and industrial history of the Rivelin Valley - similar to, and to compliment, the Rivelin Chair by local sculptor Jason Thomson in 2011. Lots of ideas came forward from the committee and the idea of a sculpture trail began to manifest itself. There are a number of existing sculpture sites including Longshaw, Grenoside and Buxton which hold a fascination for young families, and which could offer some ideas for our own trail. There are also numerous exhibits of larger sculptures using wood, metal and stone. So, the choice of materials and designs has been explored by the committee at several meetings and we now have a basic plan that we would like to see evolve over the next 12 months and beyond depending on finances. An individual sculpture can range enormously in complexity, size and materials; and therefore cost.

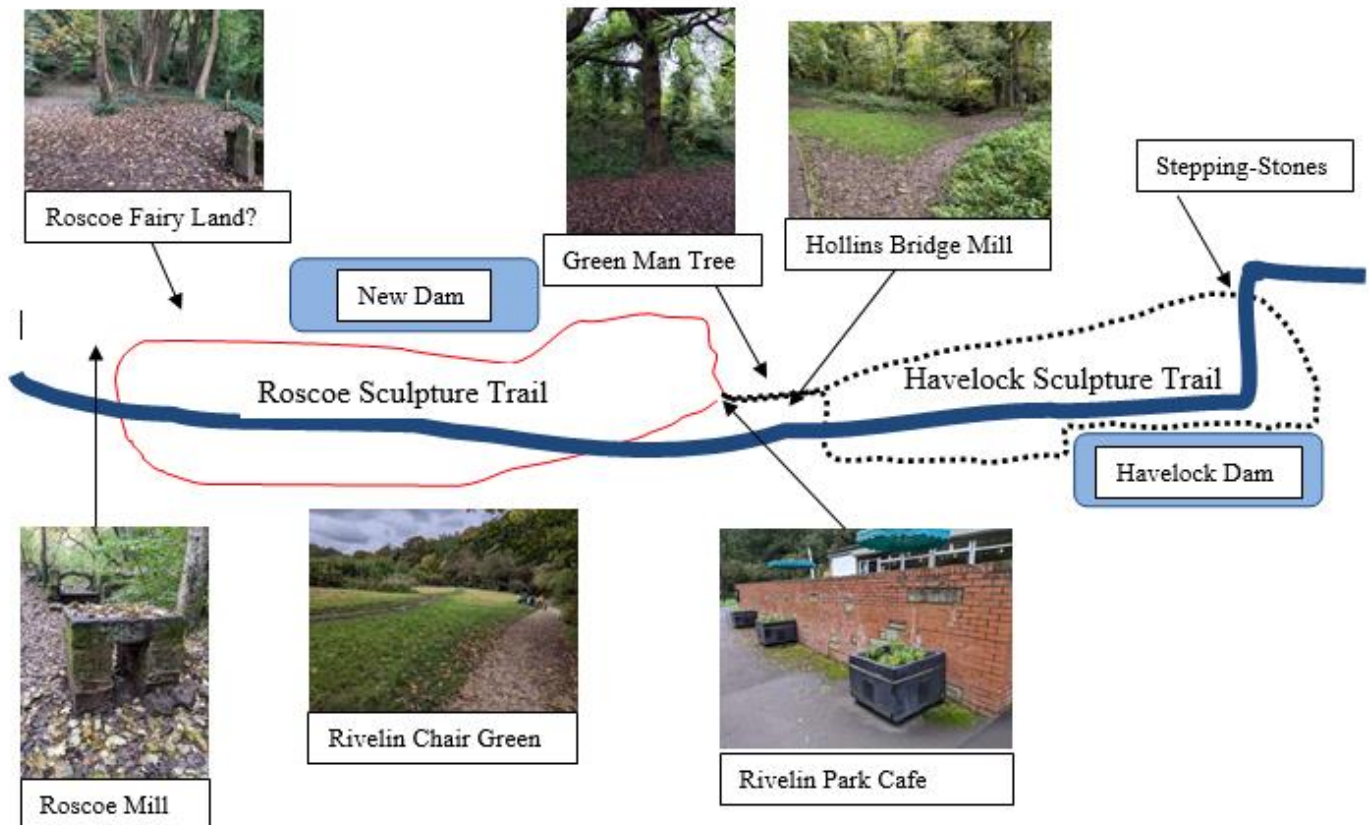
So, to begin with, we are thinking about having one quality sculpture and we are favouring a bench with a life-size grinder at his wheel at one end and maybe some birds and animals at the other and 'RVCG 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary' across the back.



Inspiration for the carving of a grinder at his wheel

A number of simpler wooden sculptures of toadstools, fairy houses, plants and animals etc in and around Rivelin Park could also be included at little cost. We could also add to this in the future as finances become available. We decided a number of carvings forming a trail near to Rivelin Park Café would be a good place to start forming a circular route via Roscoe. Similarly, we could create another circular sculpture trail via Havelock sometime in the future.

## Proposed Rivelin Sculpture Trail





Following a recent site visit to Rivelin Park by the committee, further ideas emerged including:

1. Stone carvings in the stones in the brick wall outside Rivelin Park Café
2. A Green Man carving mounted on a large oak tree near to Hollins Mill weir
3. A simple log or toadstool circle as a seating area on the green adjacent to Hollins Mill weir (and elsewhere)
4. A number of fairy houses carved into tree stumps etc at Roscoe.
5. A sign post with creatures carved into the base
6. A number of other wooden sculptures could adorn the route such as wooden stepping-stones, a maze of sticks, tree carvings, stick dens and carved animals on wooden poles.



The Green Man is a pagan symbol of rebirth and a popular choice for creative carving



Carvings of plants and animals on posts by Lorraine Botterill.



A life-size carving of a stonemason by Lorraine Botterill



Longshaw has a number of 'fairy houses' carved into stumps that are absolutely fascinating for children ...(and me!)

We are also very interested in a possible design by metal sculptor Jason Hepponstall of a mill worker made from recycled cutlery which would also be very representative of the Rivelin's historic cutlery industry.

We have contacted a number of local sculptors to gauge their interest and to assess their suitability for the project. We will invite them along individually to walk the proposed route and to allow them to offer further suggestions. Ultimately, we will have to cost and prioritise the options and then place the orders with the sculptors selected. It would also be good to get local school children involved in the project if possible.

The RVCG committee has decided to give around £5k of its own money to kickstart the project with the hope of raising £10-£15k over the next 12 months. Therefore, if any of our members, or friends of members, can help in any way, then I would like to hear from you. From helping us to design the sculpture trail and offer ideas, having the skills required to produce sculptures or just to donate money to the project and maybe have your own dedicated sculpture. Please get in touch with me.

However, before we can do any of this, we need to get the Sheffield City Councils permission as it is on their land and there are obvious concerns about safety, future maintenance and vandalism.

Graham Appleby  
07850712988



## RVCG 30 Year Anniversary

The RVCG will be celebrating 30 years next April 2021 although with current Covid restrictions, it's hard to plan for any events. We would normally hold a special event for our AGM on 14<sup>th</sup> April 2021 which you might want to pencil into your diary although this may end up as a Zoom event. However, we will think of something to entertain you and to celebrate the moment.

The RVCG has a membership of around 230 households which equates to over 600 members. We have over 70 members who actively participate in the functioning of the RVCG and a very dedicated team of committee members. We have sold over 1500 of the current 6<sup>th</sup> edition of 'Walking the Rivelin'. The RVCG support has remained fairly stable throughout its life but inevitably people do want to stand down eventually and the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary seems to be the right time for a number of key members. So here is a list of functions where we are looking for help:

**Website manager:** Jonathan Paragreen has done a fantastic job for us over the last 10 years and will be happy to support a new website manager to get the hang of things

**Social Media manager:** We have Facebook and twitter accounts and we also need our events advertising. This could possibly also be done by the website manager

**Newsletter Editor:** Margaret Sanderson has stood down after 30 years and therefore we are looking for someone to collect articles and to create the newsletter.

**Task Team Co-ordinator:** Keith Kendall is to stand down in April after nearly 30 years of dedication to the RVCG. Our task days are very popular but need careful planning and management and probably better done by a small management team.

**Chairman:** Graham Appleby gave 12 months notice last April after 10 years as chairman but will stay in post until a

replacement is found or he is forced to leave. If anyone is interested in leading this successful organisation, then there will be lots of support from the committee and the membership.

Whilst we strive hard to maintain and expand the boundaries and functions of the RVCG, it is only as good as its committee and volunteers allow. If you are interested in joining the committee or would just like to help out on one of its many functions, then please get in touch with the Chairman.

Graham Appleby  
07850712988

## Our first Open Meeting of 2021

Please join us for our first Zoom meeting to replace our Open Meetings. Using your computer, iPad, tablet or mobile phone, you should be able to click on the link given and this will give you access to the Zoom meeting. Following our recent newsletter article about the Hawley Collection, I have invited Nick Duggan to give us a talk on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> Jan 2021 at 7:30pm and will last about an hour and a half.

### Nick Duggan Presents

*The wonders of the world's largest tool and metalwork collection - The Hawley Collection*



**7:30pm Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> January 2021**

Members will be sent the details by email otherwise please contact:

Chairman: Graham Appleby 07850712988

# THE RECORDER – Autumn 2020

## The Recorder

It is a dull day with no wind but the forecast is for lots of rain and wind next week – great, just what we need! Where are the lovely, crisp, sunny autumn days we used to get? I love the sound and feel of crunching dried leaves beneath my feet, but at the moment they are just a soggy mess. My four water butts have been full for the last few weeks. On 12<sup>th</sup> August we had another storm with an amazing display of sheet lightning. I was watching it at 1.15am and the flashes lit up the whole valley so I could see the fields as if it was daytime. After there was a rushing wind and heavy rain. The blackberries have been good this year so the rain suited them, not so good for the coloured butterflies though and numbers of Peacocks and Small Tortoiseshells are down. Cabbage Whites and Speckled Wood came into the garden in good numbers (not so good for my broccoli) but Holly Blue numbers are down on last year. Another record was broken on the 3<sup>rd</sup> October which was the wettest day on record, throughout the country, since 1891 when records begin. Someone said there was enough rain to fill Loch Ness (that is a lot of rain).

We are continuing to trap moths, weather permitting. The Autumn moths have taken over from the Summer ones, although some do have a second brood later in the year. Since my last article we have had Marbled Beauty, Scarce Footman, Early Thorn, Dark Arches, Common Marbled Carpet. Shuttle-shaped Dart, Large Yellow Underwing, Small Phoenix, Riband Wave and Chequered Fruit-tree Tortrix. Despite the cooler nights our Noctule bat is still around so, hopefully, it will be able to eat enough to survive the winter. On 1<sup>st</sup> October, which was a sunny day, we went a late afternoon walk in

Blacka Woods. We were walking on the track leading to the car park when a big Red Deer Stag rose up from the heather less than 100 metres from us. We and the deer were taken by surprise and just looked at each other for a few seconds. Then the deer, with its head held high and chest out, walked majestically on over the rise of the hill, no doubt to look for some female company at this rutting time. That was definitely one of my best "nature moments" this year.

At about 11.15am on the 15<sup>th</sup> October I was walking up the road to the shops when I heard the sound of honking geese. There were 50+ geese (probably Pink-footed) flying, very high, in a perfect V shape formation towards the north.

Suddenly they veered in a north-easterly direction. The skein became a chaotic, close-knit, jumble of birds, and continued like this until they were out of sight. I can only think that they spotted a predator nearby and adopted this position in order to confuse any hawk. I had seen the Buzzard about an hour earlier over the valley.

On the 16<sup>th</sup> October a few members of the RVCG committee went on a recce in the valley to discuss where we might put a sculpture or similar to celebrate our 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary next year. More on that from Graham. We also looked at the many Ash trees that are down there. A lot are showing signs of Ash-dieback and some have been marked for removal. This is very sad as it will make a big difference to the look of the valley, with big gaps reminiscent of the time of the Dutch Elm disease. Trees are being chopped down in Endcliffe Park now. There are many places with Ash in their names going back centuries. The valleys around Ashford in the Water are still predominantly Ash dominated and will be drastically changed if the disease takes hold.

The whole of the UK is affected and I saw signs of it when I was at Loch Lomond this year.

It is the time of year when migrants will be wending their way here from Scandinavia. A flock of Fieldfares has been spotted near Doveholes over in Derbyshire. My sons, in northern Sweden, reported that they had had their first snow this morning, so keep a look out for Redwings and Waxwings too. There are certainly lots of berries for them to eat at the moment. I heard an interesting and very disturbing fact on the radio recently. In New York alone 100,000 migrating birds die crashing into skyscrapers. I get the occasional bird hitting the window, usually juveniles, but how many die hitting high rise buildings in the world. I hope someone is looking into this to find a solution.

Now is the time to look for fungi. There should be plenty with all this damp weather. Please let me know if and when you see the geese flying over and when the thrushes arrive. If you take a good photograph of anything in nature send it to Graham as we are hoping to put more in the newsletter. Maybe we should have a local photographic competition for the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. If anyone has any ideas as to how we can celebrate our 30 years please also let Graham know.

Thank you for your records:-

**Shirley Foster** S10 – 30.6.20 – Found a hedgehog with two hoglets whilst clearing out her garage. Shirley left them more bedding and food but, unfortunately, the nest was abandoned. The young were taken to a hedgehog carer to nurture them.

**Sue Shaw** S6 – 13.9.20 – found a hairy caterpillar on her doorstep which was identified as a Buff Ermine Moth. They feed on nettles, honeysuckle and other herbaceous plants and are quite common. 1.10.20 - large Crayfish, and 20-30 Black-headed Gulls and

same number of Mallard on the Havelock Dam. 14.9.20 -2 Dippers flying downstream above playground bridge. 15.9.20 – about 20 geese flying down Loxley Valley towards Hillsborough. 27.9.20 A Heron actually flew past her house window. Sue has also seen the young of Mallard, Mandarin, Coot, Blue Tit, Grey Wagtail and Dippers this year.

**Gillian Drinkwater** S10 – 3.10.20 – Group of 3 female and 6 male Mandarin Ducks (in beautiful new plumage) on Wolf Wheel.

**Roger Kite** S10 – 23.9.20 – Willow Warbler in garden.

**Joan Buckland** S10 - 7.8.20 – 20 Screaming Swifts; 8.8.20 – 3 Swifts (last sighting); 28.9.20 – 6 Swallows/Martins going south (last sighting). 29.8.20 – flock of Long-tailed Tits, Blue Tits, with 1 Coal Tit and 1 Goldcrest.

Joan Buckland  
18.10.20

Speaking of birds flying into windows, you may remember back in Spring, I wrote about a bluetit that was attacking its own reflection in my conservatory glass. Well apart from a summer break, probably whilst raising a family, it has reappeared. Almost every day for the past few weeks, this cheeky little chappie is still desperately trying to frighten away its own reflection!



Graham Appleby